

Message Text

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12

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 SAM-01 DRC-01 IO-14 NEA-10 /127 W

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R 251717Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8248

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6195

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OREP, UR, US

SUBJ: CODEL KENNEDY: CONCLUDING STAGE OF VISIT

REF: MOSCOW 5944

1. SUMMARY. SENATOR KENNEDY'S TRAVELS TO TBILISI AND LENINGRAD DREW UNUSUALLY LARGE CROWDS AND GAVE HIS VISIT A LARGER PUBLIC ASPECT THAN IT HAD ACHIEVED IN MOSCOW. SOVIET HOSTS ACCEPTED IN GOOD GRACE THE SCHEDULE CHANGES SOUGHT FOR EXPOSURE'S SAKE BY THE KENNEDY PARTY -- A MARKET IN TBILISI AND A FACTORY IN LENINGRAD. BUT THEY REACTED NEGATIVELY TO HIS EXPRESSED DESIRE TO MEET JEWISH ACTIVISTS NIGHT OF APRIL 24. END SUMMARY.

2. KENNEDY'S PRINCIPAL AIM IN NON-MOSCOW PART OF TOUR APPEARED TO BE GREATEST POSSIBLE CONTACT WITH ORDINARY SOVIETS. AS BEFORE, THIS CUT ACROSS OFFICIAL DESIRE TO KEEP HIM BOTTLED UP IN PROTOCOL FUNCTIONS BUT, AS BEFORE, KENNEDY PARTY SUCCEEDED IN HAVING THINGS MOSTLY THEIR OWN WAY. THE CROWD THAT PURSUED HIM IN THE TBILISI MARKET WAS SPONTANEOUS AND ENTHUSIASTIC, AND MOST OF THEM SEEMED TO KNOW WHO HE WAS (THOUGH ONE OLD MAN IDENTIFIED HIM AS "PRESIDENT JOHN KENNEDY").

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THE RESPONSE WAS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS VOLUBLE IN THE

LENINGRAD ELECTRIC TURBINE FACTORY WHICH IS PRESUMABLY MORE BLASE ABOUT FOREIGN VISITORS.

3. ON AN OFFICIAL LEVEL THE SENATOR WAS CLEARLY BEING TREATED AS A POTENTIAL PRESIDENT. GEORGIAN PARTY CHIEF SHEVARDNADZE HURRIED OUT TO LUNCH WITH KENNEDY AT A STATE FARM AFTER ADDRESSING A WRITERS' UNION MEETING IN THE MORNING. AND LENINGRAD PARTY CHIEF ROMANOV ACCOMPANIED KENNEDY ON HIS TOUR OF THE FACTORY THERE. MOST IMPORTANT, OF COURSE, WAS THE PRESENCE ON THE SPECIAL PLANE OF BREZHNEV'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER ALEKSANDROV, WHOM THE GENERAL SECRETARY HAD ASSIGNED TO THE PARTY FOLLOWING HIS FOUR-HOUR TALK WITH THE SENATOR APRIL 21. ALEKSANDROV, IN THE TWO TOASTS HE GAVE IN GEORGIA, SPOKE EFFUSIVELY OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE ROLE OF PRESIDENT NIXON AND GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV IN BRINGING A "GREAT TURN" IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. AND HE SAID THAT, OF THE 250 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE USSR, IT WOULD BE HARD TO FIND A DOZEN WHO OPPOSED STRENGTHENING U.S.-SOVIET TIES.

4. SENATOR KENNEDY'S MOST SENSITIVE PROBLEM WAS SQUARING THE GOOD RELATIONSHIP HE SOUGHT WITH THE SOVIET LEADERS WITH HIS DESIRE TO ESTABLISH TIES WITH JEWISH ACTIVISTS. HE APPARENTLY DECIDED NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT UNTIL AFTER HIS MEETING WITH BREZHNEV. THEN, HOWEVER, HE SET UP A LATE-EVENING APRIL 24 APPOINTMENT WITH A JEWISH GROUP THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF A U.S. CORRESPONDENT. (THE EMBASSY DID NOT PLAY AN INTERCEDING ROLE BETWEEN THE KENNEDY PARTY AND THE ACTIVISTS.) KENNEDY INFORMED HIS HOSTS OF THE MEETING IN ADVANCE; THE REACTION, AS HIS STAFF REPORTED IT TO US, WAS STRONGLY NEGATIVE. NEVERTHELESS, THE FAREWELL CEREMONIES APRIL 25 PROCEEDED NORMALLY, THOUGH ALEKSANDROV -- WHOSE PRESENCE AT THE AIRPORT WOULD HAVE CONNOTED EXTREME WARMTH - WAS ABSENT.

5. DURING HIS VISIT SENATOR KENNEDY RECEIVED A NUMBER
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OF INDIVIDUAL APPEALS ON EXIT CASES FROM AMERICAN AND SOVIETS (ONE WAS FURTIVELY HANDED TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER DURING THE TOUR OF THE LENINGRAD FACTORY). KENNEDY TRIED TO TELEPHONE MRS. POLINA EPLEMAN (MOSCOW 5147 AND PREVIOUS) IN LENINGRAD, BUT MRS. EPELMAN INFORMED THE CONGEN THAT THE PHONE SHE WAS AT HAD SUDDENLY "GONE OUT OF ORDER"; INSTEAD, THE SENATOR LEFT A LETTER FOR HER WITH THE CONGEN.

AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THE SENATOR PLANS TO PASS ON
MOST OF THE APPEALS TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT VIA
ALEKSANDROV.STOESSEL

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